

The Law Society of Scotland Annual General Meeting – 31 May 2018

Report by Graeme McWilliams, Convener, In-house Lawyers' Committee

The In-house Lawyers' Committee (ILC) was set up in 2015 to represent, support and promote the interests of Law Society members working in-house in Scotland and beyond. It continues the work of the In-house Lawyers Group Committee, which was established in 1973 as an independent committee of the Society.

The Law Society published its strategy 'Leading Legal Excellence' in 2015. This includes an objective to serve members through a detailed understanding of their needs. In line with this objective, the ILC's main aims are:

- To engage with in-house solicitors and trainees, ensuring the Law Society understands and serves their professional needs.
- To promote the interests and status of in-house solicitors and trainees.
- To encourage and assist in the development of better training of solicitors and trainees working in-house.
- To promote the value of employing in-house solicitors and trainees to organisations who do not currently employ solicitors or trainees.

We have continued to identify and recruit further new ILC members representing the public and private in-house sectors. We want to ensure that the ILC is as representative of our diverse in-house legal community as we can, which continues to grow and around 30% of the profession now works in-house. We will continue to recruit as the need arises during 2018 to strengthen our ability to deliver for our members.

Serving the various facets of our membership by providing accessible and relevant CPD remains a high priority. In October, the Law Society of Scotland's CPD & Training team ran a very well received full day course entitled In-House Best Practice, which was designed as an equivalent to the Practice Management course delivered to private practice solicitors. This ran again in April 2018 with good attendance and feedback and we aim to continue to deliver this event on a bi-annual basis.

Our free seminar programme continues to offer seminars in Edinburgh and by video conference to various locations across Scotland or an individual's computer. In doing this we are ensuring we make high quality CPD accessible and available to all our members. Our regular evening CPD seminars have included sessions on time management, GDPR, the Financial Conduct Authority and mediation, and we welcomed the return of the Faculty's 21st Century Bar conference in December, which is always popular with the in-house sector.

The annual in-house conference is scheduled for 18 June, running for the first time in Glasgow. We are delighted to be supported by DLA Piper, CMS and Pinsent Masons as sponsors, with additional sponsorship pending. We are all looking forward to a range of sessions, which this year deliver on key themes for in-house lawyers including the

challenges business partnering in the digital age brings, how to design a successful transformation plan and the big regulatory issues of 2018. Once again, the Rising Star Award will be presented at the close of the conference; this Annual Award (now in its fifth year), celebrates emerging talent among the in-house community. Last year, Leanne Hammel of ECS IT consultancy was awarded the accolade from a competitive shortlist. All members of the profession are invited to nominate in-house trainees or lawyers with up to five years PQE whose contributions and achievements deserve to be recognised. It really is tremendous to see the wealth of talent among the next generation of the profession and a pleasure and privilege to celebrate it.

In-house traineeships and promoting their value amongst the in-house community remains a hot topic, as while almost a third of the profession works across a range of organisations, only 11% of traineeships are in-house. The ILC aims to commission a piece of research into this area in 2018, to allow us to convert the anecdotal evidence we pick up from our networks into concrete data that we can work with in future. This project is very much aligned with the ILC's key aims, so we look forward to taking it forward.

Moving on from the successful launch of the "Who is your client?" supplementary guidelines for in-house lawyers in 2017, we continue to encourage the creation and sharing of relevant in-house 'best practice' and knowledge through increased use of articles, blogs and social media as critical to engaging with our in-house colleagues. Our regular Journal interviews with in-house solicitors continue to prove very popular. We have profiled a varied range of in-house colleagues from across private and public-sector organisations. It is great to see the numbers following and engaging with us on Twitter and LinkedIn continuing to grow.

In August the Law Society became members of In-house Counsel Worldwide, a relationship which we know will provide a rich resource for Scottish solicitors working at home and abroad. I attended the In-house Counsel Worldwide summit in Toronto in April 2018, along with Kenny Robertson of RBS who co-chaired the event. Our participation was extremely well received and it was a really positive piece of engagement work amongst the international delegation, with us having a stage to promote the Scottish profession.

In conclusion, the Committee is dedicated to ensuring our in-house members are represented and receive tailored support. We are guided by the Society's priorities, consult our members on what they want and take cognisance of the Society's annual survey of members. We listen to our members and aim to continue to identify new opportunities for us to build on the work we do already.

Graeme McWilliams
In-house Lawyers' Committee Convener
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